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PART-TIME FARMING IN A RURAL-INDUSTRIAL AREA OF LOUISIANA

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Introduction

In recent years, part-time farming has become recognized as a type of agricultural activity which influences the nature of farm problems in various localities. Studies of part-time farming are useful, first, because a knowledge of the organization and activities on part-time farms aids in describing and understanding farm enterprises, and second, in order to furnish information to groups and individuals interested in the possibilities of combining industrial and agricultural employment.

The present study of part-time farming is limited to the farm activities of workers employed at a large paper mill in Bogalusa, Louisiana. This locality was selected for study because it is typical of the part-time farming opportunities created by a large industrial plant situated in an area of the South poorly adapted to farming. The expansion of industry in the South, since cities are small, generally leaves rural areas readily accessible, so that a home in the country is within the reach of many workers.

Whether or not part-time farming, associated with full-time industrial employment, should be encouraged for industrial workers in rural areas, is the principal concern of this study. A description of farm organization, estimated earnings, and attitudes is essential to a thorough understanding of this problem, which is particularly vital to groups urging industrial decentralization in the United States.

Extent of Part-Time Farming

Since all types of farmers are likely to work off their farms at times during the year, a uniform definition of part-time farming has never been satisfactorily established. This study is concerned only with part-time farmers who obtain their principal income from industrial employment, and whose farm enterprise is a secondary matter in obtaining a livelihood. There are few statistics relating to this specific type of part-time farming in the United States and in Louisiana.

According to the 1935 Census of Agriculture, 30.5 per cent of all farm operators in the United States worked off their farm one day or more in 1934. However, only 11.2 per cent worked off their farms 100 days or more. In Louisiana, although 21.5 per cent of all farmers worked some time off their farms in 1934, only 6.8 per cent worked 100 days or more. About 23 per cent of the off-farm work of the latter group was classed as agricultural employment.

Part-time farmers are probably most numerous in southeastern Louisiana, although considerable numbers are also concentrated in other areas. The location of industrial enterprises is a principal factor influencing the distribution of part-time farms throughout the state. This is particularly true of industries closely associated with agriculture, such as lumbering, food processing, paper and pulp

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manufacturing, and fishing and trapping. In areas of Louisiana where these industries are important, more than 10 per cent of all farmers worked 100 or more days off the farm in 1934.

In Washington Parish, which includes the area studied, 20.4 per cent of all farm operators worked off their farms in 1934, and more than half of these operators worked 100 or more days. Almost all of this latter group were employed in non-agricultural occupations. The part-time farms of the parish are concentrated in Wards 4 and 6 about Bogalusa, the industrial center of this rural area.

Industrial Employment in Washington Parish

This study is restricted to paper mill workers, and all of the 64 part-time farmers interviewed were steadily employed in industry. Their part-time farms were usually established on the poorer phases of the terrace soils along the Pearl River, which forms the Louisiana-Mississippi boundary. Because of poor drainage this land is not well adapted to farming, and is utilized for part-time farming principally because of its availability near the paper mill. The small full-time commercial farms of the area raise cotton or cotton and beef, with a considerable number of subsistence farms.

The paper mill, about which the enterprises of Bogalusa (14,596 population in 1940) are centered, was established in 1918. It has increased its output 70 per cent since 1931 and is the principal source of industrial employment in the parish. The cessation of operations a few years ago by a sawmill which was at one time the largest in the world, removed a second principal source of employment for the residents of the area. The present importance of the paper mill, which is still expanding, is indicated by its 1940 capacity of 675 cords of wood per day, with 950 workers employed directly in the paper mill. In addition, 483 workers were employed in an adjacent corrugated paper box factory, and additional workers were employed in woods operations.

Most of the part-time farms have been established since 1932, when the paper mill instituted continuous operation with three 8-hour shifts each day, later changing to the present system of four 6-hour shifts. The mill employees rotate through the four different shifts, changing each week. No matter which shift the worker is on, he can readily secure at least six hours of daylight in which to work on his farm.

According to the mill executives, the average wage paid to all workers in 1939 was $1,485. White workers averaged $1,622 as compared to $1,026 for colored employees. These average wages are very high relative to returns from full-time farming in Washington Parish, and enable the mill workers to enjoy a favorable standard of living.

The 64 part-time farm operators received an average wage of $1,741, substantially higher than the general average. This is the result of the high proportion of white workers in the part-time farm group, and of the influence of the high earnings of certain skilled workers and minor executives who maintained part-time farm homes. It is interesting to note from this that part-time farming in the area was not an activity by which low-income mill workers supplemented their earnings, but rather a means by which the better-paid workers sought a

more satisfactory way of life. With few exceptions, the low-paid unskilled employees of the mill lived in town, and had little interest in or opportunity to engage in part-time farming.

The chief effect of part-time farming on industrial earnings was the increase in transportation costs. According to the workers' estimates, the average cost of transportation was $1.80 a week, including only cash costs for operating an automobile or cash payments to neighbors. This average cost of $93.60 a year indicates a real barrier to part-time farming for low-wage workers. Costs of daily transportation become so great as to set a general limit to part-time farming within 10 to 15 miles of the place of employment.

Social Characteristics of Part-Time Farmers

The families of the industrial workers engaged in part-time farming revealed certain interesting group characteristics. There was a distinct scarcity of individuals in the age group 20 to 29, while the age groups 5 to 14 and 30 to 44 had the largest proportions of the family members of both sexes. Young persons just reaching maturity leave part-time farms to engage in non-farm employment, while the older industrial workers return to the rural areas to rear children.

The heads of the families ranged from 26 to 60 years in age, with the greatest number falling between 30 and 39 years. The families averaged 4.7 members living on the farm, which is somewhat higher than the usual family of four. The part-time farmers were principally local people, as 50 per cent of the 64 workers surveyed were born in Washington Parish. Of the 36 per cent born outside of Louisiana, almost all came from the nearby state of Mississippi. It was noted that relatively few of the mill workers came from outside the area, with the exception of executives and highly skilled employees.

The fact that 61 per cent of the part-time farmers had worked at the mill for a substantially longer time than they had lived on their farms indicated that most of the group had moved to the country from the city. Part-time farming in the area was largely a result of industrial workers, usually brought up on the farm, moving back to the rural area after spending several years in town. Very few part-time farmers appeared to be former full-time farmers who had reduced the scale of their farm operations after obtaining industrial employment.

Only 2 of the 64 part-time farm families were colored. Part-time farm operation requires both ambition and managerial ability, along with a wage sufficient to acquire a farm and to bear the cash cost of transportation to and from the farm. Negroes apparently have neither the opportunity nor the desire to do farm work in addition to their industrial employment.

The part-time farms tended to group along good roads leading into Bogalusa, particularly around local trade centers of the area. The average distance from the mill was 6 miles, with 64 per cent of the farms within a 5-mile radius. Only four workers were more than 15 miles from the mill.

Homes of the part-time farmers were far superior to the usual farm homes of the area. More than three-fourths of the houses were wired for electricity, and most of the families also had refrigerators and other conveniences. It was clearly

evident that the majority of the part-time farmers attempted to secure the conveniences of a city home, such as ordinarily would be too expensive relative to the low farm incomes of the area.

Organization of Part-Time Farms

Since the 64 part-time farms varied widely in respect to crop acres, receipts and expenses, earnings, and capital invested, they were classified into three groups —28 residential, 20 semi-commercial, and 16 commercial part-time farms. The principal criteria used in forming this classification were acres in crop land, productive man work units, and cash receipts per farm. These various measures overlapped somewhat, and experienced judgment was necessary in making a final classification. However, Table 1 indicates that the classification follows closely the statistical distribution of each of the factors.

TABLE 1. AVERAGE CROP ACRES, PRODUCTIVE MAN WORK UNITS, AND CASH RECEIPTS BY TYPE OF PART-TIME FARM, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Type of part-time farm	Number in group	Average acres in crops	Average productive man work units[1]	Average cash receipts
Residential	28	2.4	41	$ 10
Semi-commercial	20	10.4	92	81
Commercial	16	25.0	252	639
All part-time farms	64	10.5	116	190

[1] The productive man work units represent the number of 10-hour days per year required to do all the farm work.

Residential part-time farmers operate small farms in order to reduce living costs and secure a better home, not to earn cash income from farming. Semi-commercial farmers have incidental cash sales and a larger scale of operation, but the farmer's principal interest is still production for home consumption. On commercial part-time farms, cash sales ranging from $150 to more than $1,000 indicate that additional income was a principal objective for farm operation.

In determining the usual farm organization for each of these types of farms, the average of modal groups was used, whereas in determining dollar values for receipts and expenses, an arithmetic average of all farms was used. Modal groups were used for farm organization because the small size of crop acres and livestock items makes the figures extremely liable to distortion by unusual enterprises on a few farms. On the other hand, cash items concerning receipts and costs were more uniform, and the arithmetic average for these items was satisfactory.

The 28 residential part-time farms had very small crop and livestock enterprises. The usual farm had 2.4 acres of crop land, which included 1.5 acres of corn, 0.2 acre of peas, 0.2 acre of sweet potatoes, and 0.5 acre in garden. Livestock included 1 cow, 1 other dairy animal, 4 hogs, 24 hens, and occasionally a work animal.

This type of farm organization required an average of only 41 productive man work units, and permitted practically no cash income from sales of farm

TABLE 2. USUAL FARM ORGANIZATION, BY TYPE OF FARM, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Item	Residential	Semi-Commercial	Commercial
Total crop land (acres)	2.4	10.4	25.0
Total farm land (acres)	10.0	30.0	50.0
Crops:			
Cotton (acres)	0.0	0.0	6.0
Corn (acres)	1.5	8.3	13.9
Peas and other legumes (acres)	0.2	1.0	2.6
Sugar cane for syrup (acres)	0.0	0.0	0.5
Sweet potatoes (acres)	0.2	0.4	0.8
Irish potatoes (acres)	0.0	0.2	0.4
Garden (acres)	0.5	0.5	0.8
Livestock:			
Work stock (number)	1	1	2
Milk cows (number)	1	2	3
Other dairy cows (number)	1	5	3
Sows (number)	0	1	1
Other hogs (number)	4	6	6
Chickens (number)	24	30	30

products. A productive man work unit is the average amount of farm work a man can accomplish in a 10-hour day. In other words, on the usual residential farm one man could care for the farm by spending an average of about two hours a day for the 200 days in the year in which most farm work in the area is done.

The usual semi-commercial farm had 10.4 acres of crops, distributed among 8.3 acres of corn, 1.0 acre of peas, 0.4 acre of sweet potatoes, 0.2 acre of Irish potatoes, and 0.5 acre of garden. The livestock organization included one work animal, 2 milk cows, 5 other dairy animals, 1 sow, 6 other hogs, and 30 chickens. Productive man work units required for this organization are 91, or about 4 to 5 hours a day for 200 days in the year. Although this organization provides principally food for the family, the surplus of feed and livestock permits occasional cash sales.

The usual organization on the 16 commercial part-time farms approached the closest to customary full-time farm organization for the area. Twenty-five acres were in crops, with 6 acres of cotton, 13.9 acres of corn, 2.6 acres of peas, 0.5 acre of sugar cane for syrup, 0.8 acre of sweet potatoes, 0.4 acre of Irish potatoes, and 0.8 acre in garden. Livestock included 2 work animals, 3 milk cows, 3 other dairy animals, 1 sow, 6 hogs, and 30 chickens. Two of the farms in the commercial group operating dairy enterprises were excluded in determining this usual organization. The requirement of 252 productive man work units for the commercial part-time farm indicates that a considerable amount of family or hired labor must be used, as an industrial worker can scarcely care for the peak load in this farm organization. In fact, on a basis of 200 days of labor on the farm, the operator would have to work full time if he did all the labor himself.

Important differences are thus evident between part-time farms in regard to organization. Cotton, because of its high labor requirement, is important principally on the commercial farms. Corn is grown on all farms, being generally used for feeding the milk cow on residential farms, and for feeding all

livestock on other part-time farms. Only half of the residential farms had work animals, whereas the commercial farms generally had two work animals. Milk cows were the most characteristic enterprise for part-time farms, since all farms had them. Semi-commercial farms had the most livestock, principally because the farms were larger and more livestock appeared to require less work than larger crop acreages. On all types of farms, only enough hogs and chickens were kept to supply the family needs. The livestock enterprises on several of the part-time farms were influenced by the hog or calf projects of children studying agriculture in high school.

Garden Organization

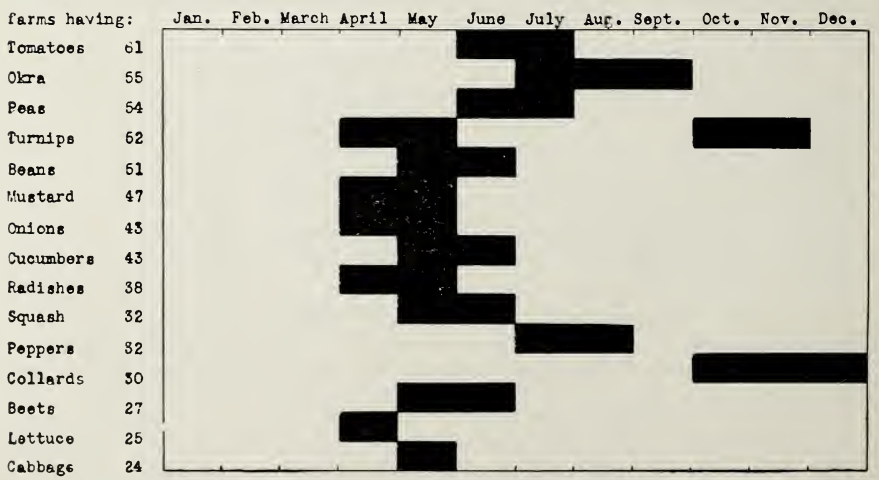
All part-time farmers considered the garden a highly important phase of the farm organization, and family use of the produce was a principal factor in the total value of farm earnings. The average of all farmers' estimates concerning the value of their garden to them was $75, with the semi-commercial farmers placing the highest estimates of any group, $90.

Only one part-time farmer interviewed did not have a garden in 1940, although in previous years he had one. The size of garden varied from 0.1 acre to 1.5 acres, with 0.5 being the most common acreage.

Washington Parish has an average frost-free growing season of about 8 months. Thus, there are about six months in which the less hardy vegetables may be consumed fresh from the garden. In addition, hardy vegetables such as turnips and collards may be grown for use during the colder months.

For all farms, the usual garden organization included the 15 different vegetables listed in Figure 1 according to their frequency. As is evident in the chart, most of the vegetables were consumed in April, May, and June. After July, only

FIGURE 1. USUAL ORGANIZATION OF GARDEN, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1940*



*The black bars indicate the time of year the vegetables were consumed fresh from the garden.

one or two fresh vegetables were obtained from the garden. Many of the farmers grew turnips and collards during the late fall months, so that January, February, and March were the only months of the year when fresh vegetables were not obtained.

The vegetables most commonly grown by the part-time farmers were tomatoes, okra, peas, turnips, and beans. In addition to fresh vegetables, the gardens furnished sufficient produce for an average of 119 quarts of canned vegetables. Small amounts of fruit from the farm were also canned. The residential part-time farmers canned the least fruits and vegetables. The semi-commercial farmers were the chief consumers of home-canned food.

Farm Products Used in the Home

Part-time farming is carried on largely to produce food for the family, since only 16 of the 64 farms surveyed were commercial in nature. Table 3 lists the quantity and total value of the products which the 64 part-time farm families used at home. These data should not be interpreted too literally, since they are an average of farmers' estimates concerning matters on which recollections are not very definite. In addition, it is extremely difficult to obtain a dollar estimate of the value of garden products to the family. In valuing the livestock and crop products other than garden, the average price received by farmers in the district, as compiled by the Agricultural Marketing Service, was used.

In addition to their gardens, most of the part-time farmers produced pork, poultry, eggs, milk, and butter for home use. Wood and field crops were additional items of some importance on a few farms. The 64 farms produced for home use an average of 401 pounds of pork, 37 chickens, 111 dozen eggs, 460 gallons of milk, and 77 pounds of butter. The average per farm was greatest in all cases for the commercial farms, although in some cases the values are probably larger because of surplus home production beyond the family needs. The commercial and semi-commercial farms, as would be expected, had the greatest value for wood and field crops used. The semi-commercial part-time farmers made the highest estimates for value of garden, with an average of $90 as compared to $63 for residential and $73 for all part-time farmers.

The total value of the various farm privileges added up to an average of $291, and formed the principal income item for most part-time farms. Residential farms averaged only $218 for value of all farm products as compared to $339 for semi-commercial and $357 for commercial part-time farmers.

Capital Requirements For Part-Time Farming

Particular effort was made in this study to obtain information concerning capital requirements for part-time farms in the area. Table 4 presents the average capital investment on 61 part-time farms studied. Only three of the part-time farmers rented farms, and these were excluded in computing the average capital invested in the various types of farms.

The houses on all part-time farms were considerably better than most farm dwellings, and the average value estimated by the farmers was $1,275. Homes on the commercial farms were generally poorer and of lower value than those on resi-

TABLE 3. AMOUNT OF FARM PRODUCTS USED IN HOME, BY TYPE OF FARM, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Type of Farm	Pounds pork used	Chickens used per year	Dozens eggs used	Gallons of milk used	Pounds butter used	Cords wood used	Value field crops used	Value of garden	Value of all farm privileges
Commercial	536	48	149	565	94	5	$35	$71	$357
Semi-commercial	448	42	110	536	84	7	20	90	339
Residential	291	29	90	345	62	2	8	63	218
All part-time farms	401	37	111	460	77	4	19	73	291
Usual full-time farms*	500	30	100	500	†	8	38	50	262

*Source: Kenneth Bachman and R. J. Saville, "Agricultural Adjustments in Washington Parish" (unpublished manuscript on file at the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station).

†Not available.

TABLE 4. VALUE OF REAL ESTATE AND OTHER PROPERTY, BY TYPE OF FARM. 61 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1940*

Type of part-time farm	Machinery	Livestock	Land	Dwelling	Other buildings	Average capital
Residential	$ 18	$122	$ 422	$1,267	$ 81	$1,910
Semi-commercial	59	286	767	1,362	195	2,669
Commercial	158	547	1,403	1,174	307	3,589
All part-time farms	68	280	776	1,275	173	2,572

* Three rented farms are excluded from this tabulation.

dential and semi-commercial part-time farms. Investment in land was next in importance, ranging from $422 on residential to $1,403 on commercial part-time farms. Because of residential use, land values were much higher than justified by farm returns in the area.

Livestock was third in importance on all part-time farms, followed by buildings other than dwellings, and last of all by farm machinery and equipment. The average farm capital investment on all types was $2,572, which appears to be a reasonable figure for the investment required on most part-time farms.

The usual farm machinery and equipment on the part-time farms are listed in Table 5. The most common implements were turning plow and Georgia stocks, which are one-horse plows used in preparing land for planting, and in cultivating. Only the larger farms had a harrow, and relatively few had a wagon. All farms had the various essential small tools. A few commercial farms had cotton planters, fertilizer distributors, and middle breakers.

TABLE 5. USUAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT ON PART-TIME FARMS, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1940

Tools and equipmept	Number of part-time farms having equipment	Percentage distribution
Small tools	64	100.0
Turning plow	62	96.9
Work gear	51	79.8
Georgia stocks	50	78.1
Spring-tooth harrow	40	62.5
Wagon	23	35.9

The residential part-time farmers had an average investment in machinery of only $18. Many individuals borrowed implements from neighbors or purchased tools jointly with other farmers.

The average value of livestock for the 61 farms was $280, ranging from $122 on residential to $547 on commercial part-time farms. However, the commercial group here includes two dairy farms, on which the investment in livestock averaged $2,000. In general, livestock investments averaged only slightly more than $200 for the average part-time farm.

Farm Indebtedness

Only 28 of the 61 part-time farms operated by owners were mortgaged. The average indebtedness was $522 on these 28 farms, with little difference between

types. The original mortgages averaged $812, indicating that substantial payments were being made by the part-time farmers. The common reasons given for mortgaging the farm were to build a good dwelling, make repairs to the house or to purchase land for farm operations. The proportion of part-time farms free of debt was substantially higher than the proportion for all full-time farms of the area, according to Census figures.

Since 5 per cent interest on capital was deducted in computing the earnings on all farms, the mortgage interest was not considered a cost of farm operation in this study. Part-time farmers could afford to borrow all the capital needed at 5 per cent and still receive the average farm earnings indicated in the following discussion.

Farm Earnings and Expenses

Table 6 presents a financial summary of the average income and expenses of the three types of part-time farms. An inspection of the table makes obvious the difficulty of preparing financial summaries for part-time farm operation. The

TABLE 6. FINANCIAL SUMMARY, BY TYPE OF PART-TIME FARM, 62 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939[1]

Farm income and expense	Residential	Semi-Commercial	Commercial	All farms
Number of Farms	28	20	14	62
Cash Farm Receipts:				
Crops	$	$ 12	$ 241	$ 58
Livestock and livestock products	7	64	123	51
Other, including govt. payments	3	5	47	14
	10	81	411	123
Estimates of Non-Cash Receipts:				
Increase in inventory	41	44	57	46
Value of farm products used	218	339	377	293
Credit for house rent	155	184	158	165
Total Farm Receipts	424	648	1,003	627
Cash Farm Expenses:				
Feed	48	61	48	52
Labor	4	57	121	48
Fertilizer	10	27	67	28
Other current expenses	6	18	51	20
Purchase of livestock and equipment	31	31	109	49
	99	194	396	197
Estimates of Non-Cash Expenses:				
Depreciation (5% on bldgs. and equipment)	66	83	71	72
Decrease in livestock	2	14	41	15
Unpaid family labor	10	37	79	34
Total Farm Expenses	177	328	587	318
Cash Receipts Less Cash Expenses	−89	−113	15	−74
Total Receipts Less Total Expenses	247	320	416	309
Interest on Capital (5%)	89	133	159	119
Return for Operator's Labor	158	187	257	190

[1]Excludes 2 commercial part-time farms with dairy specialty.

majority of the receipts are estimates of non-cash items, as are a large portion of the expenses. The summary was constructed to obtain a final estimate that would indicate the monetary value of the return for the operator's labor, including all types of receipts and expenses. The inclusion of certain items is arbitrary; therefore the reader may wish to omit some items in interpreting the data. For example, the total return to all members of the family for their labor on the farm must include the unpaid family labor, listed as an expense, in addition to the return for the operator's labor.

Cash receipts were negligible on the residential part-time farms, and of real importance only on the commercial farms. Two estimated figures, value of farm products used and the credit for house rent, formed almost the entire receipts for residential and semi-commercial part-time farms. Cash farm expenses on all except commercial farms were considerably in excess of cash receipts. In the average of 62 farms, farm privileges plus house rent credit accounted for 73 per cent of total farm receipts.

Cash farm expenses were greatest for feed, labor, and fertilizer on all types of part-time farms. Feed costs were the heaviest items for both residential and semi-commercial farms, but labor and fertilizer costs were the greatest expenses for commercial farms. New investment in livestock and equipment was considered an expense of the current year, since it was reflected in the receipts through the increase in inventory.

In general, part-time farm cash expenses follow a general pattern. On residential farms with little land in crops, feed is the principal cash expense. As farms grow larger, and more feed is grown, the important items of cash expense swing to hired and cropper labor, and to fertilizer for cotton production.

Taxes were not important as a cash expense, since all owner-operated farms received the benefits of the $2,000 homestead tax exemption provision in Louisiana. Only 8 of the 64 part-time farmers paid a property tax in 1939.

Part-time farmers of the residential and semi-commercial type put more cash into their farms each year than they received back in cash. Commercial part-time farms did little better than break even on a cash basis. Since the highly important non-cash receipts and expenses are tangible only in the long run, the part-time farmers are amply justified in their frequent statement that, on a cash basis, their farm costs them more each year than they get out of it. However, in making this statement the workers ignore the fact that the excess of cash expense over cash receipts really represents a purchase of farm products for the home. The fact that total farm receipts exceeded total farm expenses by an average of $309 shows that the workers really secured a net income from their investment of wages and labor in the farm.

When 5 per cent interest on the average capital invested in the farm property was deducted as a cost, the 62 part-time farm operators received an average of $190 for their labor and management on the farm. Between the various types, this figure ranged from $158 on residential and $187 on semi-commercial, to $257 on commercial part-time farms. In most cases, the final return for the operator's farm labor was less than the value of farm products used in the home, demonstrating that part of the excess of expenses and interest on capital was an expenditure of wages in farm products for home consumption.

TABLE 7. TOTAL LABOR EARNINGS ON PART-TIME FARMS, 62 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939[1]

Type	Return for operator's farm labor	Annual industrial wage	Total labor earnings
Residential	$158	$1,516	$1,674
Semi-commercial	187	1,903	2,090
Commercial	257	1,911	2,168
All types	190	1,676	1,866

[1] Excludes two commercial part-time farmers with dairy specialty.

If this average final return for the operator's farm labor is added to the operator's annual industrial wage, his total earnings for the year are substantially increased, as indicated in Table 7. The average total earnings for all types of part-time farm operators in 1939 was $1,866. The farm earnings must be considered principally as a saving of industrial earnings through decreased cash food expenses.

Factors Influencing Farm Earnings

The part-time farmer's earnings from farm operation, or total farm receipts less total farm expenses and interest on capital, is a fairly adequate measure of the part-time farm success in providing a return to the worker for his labor spent on the farm. On the 64-part-time farms surveyed, the farm labor earnings varied from —$209 to $706. Although the factors related to earnings are more difficult to ascertain on part-time farms than on full-time commercial farms, the study brought out several factors which appeared to be associated with high returns from part-time farming.

TABLE 8. SIZE OF FAMILY AS RELATED TO RETURN FOR OPERATOR'S LABOR, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Size of family	Number of part-time farms	Return for operator's labor
2 - 3	22	$155
4 - 5	23	181
6 - 7	13	272
8 or over	6	293

The most important factor was size of family. Returns for the operator's labor increased steadily with larger families (Table 8). This is an entirely logical relationship, since the principal receipt on part-time farms is farm privileges, and large families grow and use more products for the home. Small families of a man, wife, and one child averaged $155 in earnings, which increased steadily up to an average of $293 for the six families with 8 or more individuals each. Larger families were also generally associated with increasing age of the farm operator, thereby causing an apparent positive relationship between age and farm earnings.

A tabulation of acres in crops and the return for the operator's labor indicated that there was an optimum acreage of 8 to 13 acres in crops for part-time farms. Earnings on these crop acreages averaged $325, more than $100 above the average for any other acreage group (Table 9). Farms of this crop acreage apparently are best suited to provide all the products used in the home, sufficient corn to eliminate heavy feeding costs for the livestock, and yet permit the operator to handle the work without hiring additional labor.

TABLE 9. ACRES IN CROPS AS RELATED TO RETURN FOR OPERATOR'S LABOR, 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Acres in crops	Number of part-time farms	Return for operator's labor
Under 3	19	$175
3.0 - 7.9	15	187
8.0 - 12.9	8	325
13.0 - 17.9	9	141
18.0 and over	13	221

The relatively few part-time farms without cows had substantially lower earnings, as would be expected. Although the return to the operator tended to increase somewhat with the number of cows, there was no significant advantage in having more than two cows. Production of milk and butter beyond family needs did not appear profitable for part-time farms.

In general, the influence of all factors bearing on the value of farm privileges can be summed up in the general statement that the return for the operator's labor increased as the value of farm privileges increased (Table 10). The factor thus most important is a size of family able to utilize considerable farm produce. As a result, farm earnings increased up to an optimum of 8 to 13 crop acres, 2 cows, and 0.8 or more of an acre in garden.

TABLE 10. VALUE OF FARM PRIVILEGES AS RELATED TO THE RETURN FOR OPERATOR'S LABOR, 64 PART-TIME FARMS BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Farm privileges	Number of part-time farms	Return for operator's labor
$ 76 - 199	18	$ 63
200 - 299	14	212
300 - 399	22	251
400 - 499	7	356
500 and over	3	252

For part-time farms having cash receipts, the data indicated that cash receipts were not significant in influencing farm earnings unless the receipts were more than $100 (Table 11). The 14 farms having no cash receipts averaged higher returns to the operator than 24 farms which had from $1 to $100 of cash receipts. The 24 farms with more than $100 in cash receipts, however, increased their earnings substantially over the former groups. Unless a part-time farmer could really operate on a commercial scale sufficient to use both his labor and that of a cropper, it appeared that he might as well make no attempt to sell farm products. This conclusion from the statistical data is supported by common

TABLE 11. CASH RECEIPTS, AS RELATED TO RETURN FOR OPERATORS LABOR. 64 PART-TIME FARMS, BOGALUSA AREA, 1939

Cash receipts	Number of part-time farms	Return for operator's labor
No receipts	14	$169
$ 1 - 49	18	150
50 - 99	8	166
100 - 199	12	271
200 and over	12	270

opinion among the part-time farmers. If a part-time farmer does operate on a commercial scale, the best means of increasing farm earnings is to work long hours on the farm in order to avoid heavy costs for hired labor.

Two factors sometimes considered important in analyzing the earnings of part-time farms were not supported by consistent relationships in the Bogalusa area. These were the industrial wage of the operator, and the miles the farm was distant from the mill. Very few farmers were farming to supplement low incomes; therefore no relation could be expected. Miles from market also had relatively little significance when the chief operations of the farm were devoted to feed for home use.

Attitudes Toward Part-Time Farming

Each of the 64 mill employees was asked to give his chief reason for engaging in part-time farming (Table 12). The most common reason, given by 31 per cent of the farmers, was that their farm activities helped insure future security. The older workers, in particular, gave this reason. The general concept among the majority of part-time farmers was that by investing present earnings in farm property and equipment, they were saving for their old age or against the possibility of losing their industrial employment.

TABLE 12. REASONS FOR LIVING ON PART-TIME FARMS, BY TYPE OF FARM. 64 PART-TIME FARMS. BOGALUSA AREA, 1940

Reasons	Commercial	Semi-commercial	Residential	All farms Number	All farms Per cent
Future security	5	8	7	20	31.2
Reduce living expenses	2	6	6	14	21.9
Accumulate capital	2	1	1	4	6.2
Other economic reasons	2	2	4	8	12.5
To rear children	2	--	1	3	4.7
Likes to farm	1	1	4	6	9.4
Likes the country	1	1	2	4	6.2
Hobby	1	1	1	3	4.7
Something to occupy time			2	2	3.1
Total economic reasons	11	17	18	46	71.9
Total non-economic reasons	5	3	10	18	28.1
Number of part-time farms	16	20	28	64	100.0

The second most prevalent reason was to reduce living expenses. It is significant that additional cash income was not an important reason for part-time farming, except among a few commercial part-time farmers.

Non-economic reasons were also important causes of part-time farming activities. Twenty eight per cent of the part-time farmers were living on farms as a better place to rear children or because they enjoyed the country, principally as a way of life regardless of the costs or returns in an economic sense. Most of the group giving non-economic reasons were workers on residential part-time farms.

Objections to part-time farming were few, and 53 per cent of the 64 farmers offered no criticisms at all. The chief objections of the remaining farmers were the expenses of transportation, and the lack of conveniences. These objections were offered chiefly by the workers more remote from Bogalusa.

The majority of the part-time farmers, 61 per cent, stated that they would prefer full-time farming to industrial work if farm product prices would assure them as satisfactory a living as their present industrial employment. However, as a consequence of the relatively high wages at the paper mill, it is unlikely that any one of the 64 workers will shift to full-time farming so long as he can maintain his present industrial employment.

Summary

According to the analysis in this study, the optimum size part-time farm for an industrial worker in the Bogalusa area was one that most nearly produced the farm products needed for family consumption. Farms larger than this, although having substantial cash sales, were not generally profitable because of high cash expenses, particularly for hired labor and fertilizer. Commercial part-time farmers either were forced to put unduly long hours of work into the farm for a relatively small return, or to hire labor and lose money because of the high cash expense. On the other hand, some residential farms were too small, and could profitably add additional acreage to reduce feed costs, with relatively little additional labor and expense.

In general the conclusion may be drawn that the paper mill worker on a 6-hour shift, living on a 25-acre farm, with 10 acres of crop land on which are grown corn for two cows, one work animal, 5 hogs, and 30 chickens, with a few sweet potatoes, and one-half acre of garden for the family food needs, has the optimum size part-time farm. Capital requirements for such a farm are moderate, and a total investment of $2,500 in land and buildings permits the erection of a house comparing favorably in conveniences and other respects to a city home.

The total productive man work units with such an organization varies from 80 to 100, depending on the extent to which intensive crops like sweet potatoes are grown. If the operator works on the farm approximately 200 days a year, he should be able to do all the work himself by spending 4 to 5 hours a day on farm tasks. However, since the care of livestock requires some work 365 days in each year, the daily labor requirement is probably less than 4 hours a day except during the peak load in the spring.

In return for his labor spent on a part-time farm of this type, a mill worker can expect to receive from $150 to $200 in food products for family consumption, after allowing for all expenses including depreciation, unpaid family labor, and interest on capital. In addition, a large family with children of sufficient age to be useful can increase its earnings still further by expanding intensive food production. However, the actual earnings will depend largely on the desire of the operator. Since industrial wages make him independent of the farm, he may not be disposed to spend much time in securing the relatively low returns per hour of farm labor.

The cost of commuting to and from work is a chief factor limiting the extent of part-time farming about a small industrial center. Part-time farms about Bogalusa clustered together in neighborhood centers within 10 miles of the town. Farmers farther removed had costs for commuting of more than $4 a week, or $200 a year, which is a substantial reduction in a wage of $30 to $40

a week and is greater than the average farm return of $190 to the operator. Although the cost of commuting for all farms is $94, or almost half the average farm earnings, this cost cannot really be considered a true charge against part-time farms near town, since most of the workers would own and operate automobiles even though they lived in the mill town.

It should be stressed that the principal motive of most part-time farmers was the desire to save and acquire a home for future security. The quality of the land and the profitability of farming are not major considerations in locating the farm. In addition, the part-time farmers in the Bogalusa area were the mill workers most enterprising, most thrifty, most interested in future security, and with earnings sufficiently large to permit the purchase of a farm and to pay the costs of transportation.

For industrial workers of this type, working relatively short shifts each day, part-time farming may be recommended as a means for reducing living expenses and establishing a way of life superior to that in a mill village. However, industrial workers who are not disposed to work long hours in addition to the mill shift, who regard a part-time farm as desirable only if it returns a cash income, and whose earnings are insufficient to establish a good rural home, will be disappointed in attempts at part-time farming.

In other words, part-time farming in a rural-industrial area of the South should be considered primarily as a way of life, not as an easy means of supplementing the wages of low-income industrial workers. This conclusion may have considerable importance for government policy in future years, if the advocates of decentralization of industry are successful in influencing the establishment of more wage jobs in the distressed rural areas of the South.